



City of Milwaukee

Meeting Minutes

SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

ALDERMAN JOE DAVIS, SR., CHAIR
Daisy Cubias, Al Durtka, Charles Vang and Vivian Chen

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Friday, July 21, 2006

9:00 AM

City Hall, Room 301-B

Meeting Convened: 9:14 A.M.

1. Roll Call

Present Cubias, Davis, Chen, Vang

Excused Durtka

2. Approval of the minutes of the May 25, 2006 meeting.

Mr. Vang moved approval of the minutes. There were no objections.

3. Presentation on the City of Carora, in the state of Lara, Venezuela relative to establishing a friendly exchange leading to a sister city relationship, given by Cororan Mayor Julio Chavez.

Appearances by Ald. McGee from the 6th Aldermanic District; Mayor of Carora Venezuela Julio Chavez; General Consulate Martin Zanchez (Chicago); Consul de Primera Omar Sierra; Eric Sperling-Bolivarian Circles Milwaukee and Evan McDoniels

Alderman McGee gave an opening statement relative to the City of Milwaukee establishing a friendly relationship with Corora, Venezuela.

General Consulate Martin Zanchez thanked Alderman McGee and the Bolivarian Circles Milwaukee for their efforts in promoting a friendly relationship between Milwaukee and Venezuela. He then gave an overview of the culture, economics and musicians in Corora, Venezuela. He explained why they are interested in this opportunity to have a sister city relationship with the City of Milwaukee and noted their commitment to a relationship.

Mr. Omar Sierra handed out a brochure called "Venezuela Matters" (Exhibit 1).

Mayor Julio Chavez (Mr. Zanchez and Mr. Sierra as interpreters) thanked the City of Milwaukee for considering a sister city relationship with Carora, Venezuela. He then gave an overview of the city of Carora's culture, economics, businesses, etc. He advised that the initiative to establish a sister city relationship came from citizens.

Mayor Chavez explained the program they have for free eye surgery for low-income citizens of Milwaukee and other US cities. He further noted that they have already established the facilities and doctors and they are available to Milwaukee low-income residents.

Mayor Chavez described the experiment that Carora's municipality is doing, where the citizens and the government are working together. They have transferred a lot of the Mayor's and Council responsibility to the citizens and the citizens are taken an active role in running the government. The citizens have organized assemblies and they are having elections in each neighbor and are receiving funds to take care of potholes, streets, etc. And 100% of the city budget is subject to a citizen vote, included the funding for this trip, which had to be approved by the citizens assemblies.

Dr. Chen asked how is their healthcare system. Mayor Chavez explained the new constitution in Venezuela relative to health care.

Mr. Vang asked what type of investment information can they provide as to how much time would it take for a business to get through the paperwork to establish a business in their country. Mayor Chavez advised that they are under a large business boom and they have several other countries helping them with business prospects. They are currently working with Badger Meter from the US. Mr. Sanchez explained the time period it takes to establish a business in Carora and gave examples of different businesses that they have worked with through the process.

Chairman Davis asked if they have any other sister cities relationships with any other US city. Mayor Chavez answered no and they are hoping that Milwaukee will be their first. Mayor Chavez further noted that they do have a sister city relationship with a city in Italy, which is a culture exchange. Chairman Davis advised them that this committee will consider this sister city relationship.

Mr. Evan McDoniels appeared and explained his recent trip to Carora, Venezuela.

4. Presentation on the city of Patiala, India relative to establishing a friendly exchange leading to a sister city relationship, given by Mr Darshan Singh Dhaliwal, Dhaliwal Enterprises and Dr. Prem Sharma.

Appearances by Ald. Zielinski in the 14th Aldermanic District, Ald. Puente in the 9th Aldermanic District, Dr. Prem S. Sharma member of the WI. Coalition of Asian Indian Org., Inc. (WCAIO) and Mr. Balbir Singh with Punjabi Community Org. of WI.

Ald. Zielinski gave an opening statement. Ald. Puente appeared to give a statement and to show his support.

Mr. Sharma submitted the following letters: letter from Mr. Sharma WCAIO (Exhibit 2); letter from Mr. Balbir Singh president of PUNJABI Community (Exhibit 3) and letter from President S. Surjeet Singh Rakhra of Patiala, India (Exhibit 4)

Mr. Sharma gave a brief overview of the WCAIO organization. He then gave a brief comparison between India and Milwaukee.

Mr. Singh briefly explained his support of a sister city relationship.

Ms. Cubais asked if they have any other sister city relationships. Mr. Sharma advised that he doesn't think so, but he will check to make sure. Chairman Davis advised that they will check with the Sister Cities International to find out if there is any other US relationships established with Patiala, India.

5. Report on the status of the current sister cities relationships.

Chairman Davis noted that Mr. Durtka was going to report on Scherwin, Germany but he isn't here today so they will hold the discussion on Scherwin, Germany until they heard from Mr. Durtka.

Chairman Davis noted that they have received correspondence from Atty. Dominc Frinzi, indicating that he has had contact with Parma, Italy and asked that this committee hold off on any action until he get some answer.

Mr. Leonhardt advised that he spoke to Ald. Murphy regarding a relationship with Galway, Ireland and Ald. Murphy advised him that there is some interest and that he is working on establishing a group.

Chairman Davis asked that they hold Queenstown South Africa until he can establish contact.

Chairman Davis asked the members if they agree to maintain relationships with the above and asked Mr. Leonhardt what is the status of the City Attorney drawing up a formalized contracts. Mr. Leonhardt advised this committee hasn't discussed contracts and nothing has been requested of the City Attorney. He advised that Sister City International does have templates that they recommend and provide and noted that the City Attorney doesn't need to be involved. Mr. Leonhardt advised that it might be a good idea to have the City Attorney review the templates. All members agree to have the City Attorney's Office review the template and have who every is working on it appear at the next Sister Cities Committee meeting to discuss it.

6. Appearances and reports given by current sister cities relationships.

None appeared.

Roll call taken at 10:35 A.M.

Present Davis, Chen, Vang

Excused Cubias, Durtka

7. Discussion, review and recommendations on the current policy and procedures for Sister Cities relationships.

Chairman Davis asked if there were any suggestion or recommendations on the current policy and procedures.

Mr. Leonhardt referred to his revised draft of ordinance Chapter 335 (Exhibit 4) and noted the changes that were requested at the last meeting, such as including the establishing of friendly relationships.

Dr. Chen advised that they need to put together some criteria to determine how they are to select a sister city relationship. Mr. Leonhardt replied that there are some broadly stated policies and standards to follow, in terms of logical areas of mutual interest, including culture and business and a strong consideration should be given to factor that contribute to good balance between the cites, such as geography, government structure, side, etc.

Chairman Davis noted that discussion should take place regarding item #5 of Mr.

Leonhardt's draft Chapter 335-3 relative to the total number of sister city relationships adopted. It states that they should not exceed 10 and no more than 2 sister city relationships should be adopted within a 2-year period. Chairman Davis advised that some of that language in item #5 should be delete and explained that the current requests for Sister Cities Relationships is up to three right now.

Dr. Chen moved to delete the following part of item #5 under section 335-3: "and no more than 2 sister city relationships should be adopted within a 2-year period. The motion prevailed. (3-0)

The members further discussed the maximum of 10 sister city relationships.

Chairman Davis referred to item #9 under section 335-3 and asked if the Mayor's office is still willing to keep the oversight responsibility for the sister city program. Mr. Leonhardt noted that they haven't heard from them, but he will contact them to discuss it and this committee could take it up at the next meeting.

Chairman Davis referred to section 335-11 item #3 that provides that the sister city relationship shall expire after 5 years unless extended for another 5 years by council resolution, and explained that he would like to see that at the 4 1/2 years mark, a report is given to this committee on the accomplishments of that particular agreement, so that at the end of the 5 years they would know if the agreement has been active and also that they aren't automatically approving agreements that aren't active. Mr. Leonhardt asked if he is requesting that at about the 4 1/2 year mark, there is a renewal process. Chairman Davis replied yes.

Mr. Vang moved to add that at 6 months before the 5 years are up the sponsoring entity submit a renewal application. The motion prevailed. (3-0)

Chairman Davis moved to open discussion on item 8 of section 335-3 and asked the members to consider deleting item #8, so that, if there are members of any departments or elected officials who is interested in establishing additional relationship or would like to participate in those things that are related to sister city international they could do so as a representative of the City. Mr. Leonhardt advised that some city officials have travel, but it had been either at their own expense or funds were supply by community organizations. No public funds have been used in the past for sister city international travel. Mr. Leonhardt further noted that he believes that the Sister City International does recommend that public funds be available for this purpose. Further discussion took place by members relative to department budget funds being restrictive in some departments. Mr. Leonhardt than noted that at the last meeting they discussed city funds to be budgeted and establish a special purpose account for sister city relationship expenditures. Dr. Chen recommended that no city funds should be use for sister city relationship travel unless approved by this committee. Mr. Leonhardt suggested that they could strike Item #8 and amend the travel ordinance to include international sister city relationship travels. Mr. Leonhardt noted that item #7 is also related to expenditures. He further indicated that at a prior meeting this committee discussed that a special fund be created in the budget and since the mayor's office has oversight responsibility, a special fund created within the Mayor's office in the city budget approved by the Common Council with x number of dollars and appropriating it for sister city relationships expenditures and that could include travel. Dr. Chen agreed with Mr. Leonhardt.

Dr. Chen moved to delete item #8 of section 335-3. The motion prevailed. (3-0)

Mr. Leonhardt advised that they could asked the Mayor to put it into the budget or Chairman Davis could amend the budget by adding a special purpose account in the Mayor's Office with X number of dollars. Ald. Davis asked that they hold further discussion on item #8 and he could talk to the Mayor's Office on the creation of a special purpose account.

Mr. Leonhardt asked for clarification on section 335-5 relative to the application process. He explained the process and asked how this committee wants the process to be, since the recently requested sister city relationships has taken a different process. Chairman Davis advised that the procedure would be that a file be introduce and referred to this committee, so that they have a file is on record within the Common Council.

Mr. Vang moved to approve ordinance chapter 335 as amended by this committee and have it submitted to the appropriate committee and the Common Council for their actions. The motion prevailed.

8. Next meeting date, time and agenda.

Chairman Davis advised that Ms. Terry MacDonald will contact each of the members to set up the next meeting date.

Chairman Davis asked the members to bring to the next meeting some specific weekday (s) that they can consider so that this committee could meet on a set monthly basis. Mr. Leonhardt advised that he could supply a list of proposed meeting dates for 2007.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:24 A.M.

*Terry J. MacDonald
Staff Assistant*